

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

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E.O.11652:N/A

TAGS:ECIN, ENRG, COMECON

SUBJECT: SESSION OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMISSION ON
ORENBURG PIPELINE: GAS TO FLOW IN EARLY 1979.

REF: (A) MOSCOW 3897, (B) 77 MOSCOW 16178

1. CONSTRUCTION WORK ON THE ORENBURG-WESTERN BORDER
PIPELINE THAT IS TO BE FULFILLED THIS YEAR WILL ASSURE THE
TRANSMISSION OF GAS TO PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES FROM THE
BEGINNING OF 1979, ACCORDING TO SHORT TASS ITEM IN
APRIL 27 PRAVDA. THE ARTICLE, REPORTING ON THE 4TH
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SESSION OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMISSION ON BUILDING
THIS PIPELINE, STATED THAT DECISIONS TAKEN AT THE SESSION
WERE DIRECTED TO THIS END AND THAT THE PARTICIPANTS HAD
EXPRESSED SATISFACTION THAT THE 1977 WORK PLAN ON THE
PIPELINE WAS "SIGNIFICANTLY OVERFULFILLED." THE SESSION
WAS CHAIRED BY USSR DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER KATUSHEV AND
ATTENDED BY DEPUTY HEADS OF GOVERNMENT AND HEADS OF

RESPONSIBLE MINISTRIES AND AGENCIES OF BULGARIA, HUNGARY,
THE GDR, POLAND, ROMANIA, THE USSR AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA.

2. COMMENT: IT APPEARS THAT SOVIETS ARE CONFIDENT THAT
WORK ON THE ORENBURG LINE WILL HAVE PROGRESSED TO POINT OF
PERMITTING GAS TO START FLOWING TO EASTERN EUROPE IN EARLY
1979. PREVIOUSLY WE HAD HEARD THAT WORK WAS RUNNING AHEAD
OF SCHEDULE IN 1977, BUT THAT, AS A DIFFICULT STRETCH
THROUGH CARPATHIANS REMAINED TO BE CONSTRUCTED, THERE WAS
SOME DOUBT THAT PROJECT WOULD BE COMPLETED ON TIME, I.E.,
IN FOURTH QUARTER OF 1978 (REFTEL B). APPARENTLY SOVIETS -
NOW EXPECT THAT THE PIPELINE ITSELF WILL BE IN PLACE BY .
END OF THIS YEAR OR BEGINNING OF NEXT, PRESUMABLY IN TIME
TO PLAY ITS PART IN 30TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS OF CEMA
NEXT JANUARY. THERE IS, HOWEVER, STILL SOME ROOM FOR
SKEPTICISM AS TO HOW MUCH GAS WILL ACTUALLY FLOW IN 1979
(REFTEL A). TOON

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